

FANTASTIC EXPLOITS NUMBER 19



Authorized Edition



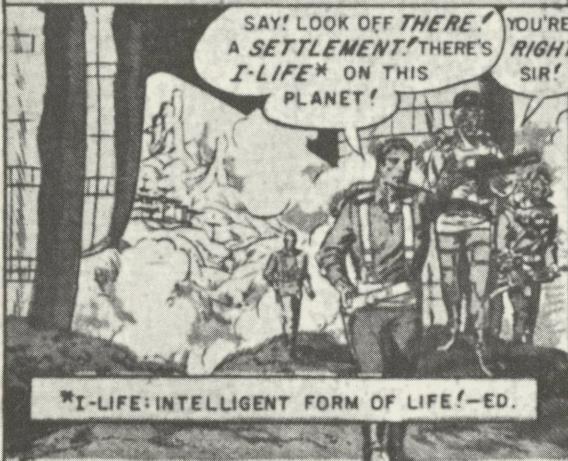
FANTASTIC EXPLOITS NO. 19. Published by THE S.F.C.A., 9875 S.W. 212 St., Miami, Fla. 33157. Editor & Publisher = G.B. Love. Asst. Editor = Jim Van Hise. Cover by Andy Warner. All strips contained herein are published with permission and are copyrighted by WILLIAM M. GAINES and cannot be reprinted. Price \$1.00 per copy (\$1.25 if mailed by first class mail.)



TWO MONTHS LATER, WE ENTER THE UNCHARTED
SOLAR SYSTEM! WE CIRCLE PLANET AFTER PLANET...
SIX IN ALL...UNTIL WE FIND A LIKELY-LOOKING ONE
TO LET-DOWN ON...

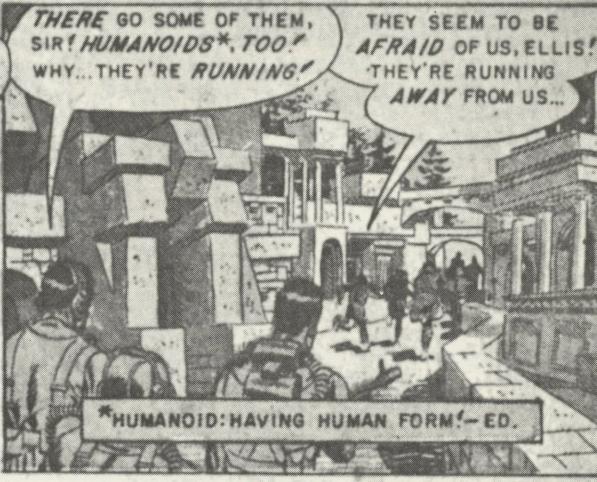


IN NO TIME FLAT WE'RE RESTING QUIETLY ON THE STRANGE NEW PLANET! THE DUST WE KICK UP WHEN WE LAND IS JUST BEGINNING TO SETTLE WHEN I PRESS THE PORT-CONTROL BUTTON...



*I-LIFE: INTELLIGENT FORM OF LIFE!—ED.

I SET OFF WITH LIEUTENANT ELLIS TO INVESTIGATE THE COLONY WHILE THE CREW STARTS WORK ON THE OVERDRIVE! SUDDENLY, AS WE APPROACH...



*HUMANOID: HAVING HUMAN FORM!—ED.

THE SETTLEMENT EMPTIES OUT FAST! THE ALIENS RUN LIKE CRAZY WHEN THEY SPOT US! THEY ALL HEAD FOR A BUNCH OF IGLOO-SHAPED STRUCTURES, AND EACH ALIEN SCRAMBLES INTO ONE...



* A-T UNIT: AUTOMATIC-TRANSLATOR UNIT!—ED.

ELLIS SWITCHES ON HIS A-T UNIT AND TUNES IT TO 'UNIVERSAL'! THEN HE STARTS TALKING...

DO NOT BE FRIGHTENED! WE COME IN PEACE! WE MEAN NO HARM! OUR ROCKET-SHIP IS DISABLED AND WE HAVE LANDED HERE TO REPAIR IT!



THE SHY ALIENS POKE THEIR HEADS OUT OF THEIR LITTLE SHELTERS ONE BY ONE AS ELLIS'S MESSAGE IS AUTOMATICALLY TRANSLATED INTO THEIR NATIVE TONGUE...

WE ARE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GALACTIC EMPIRE WITH ITS HEADQUARTERS ON THE PLANET EARTH!



LITTLE BY LITTLE, THE ALIENS Emerge FROM THEIR BOMB-SHELTERS AND EDGE TOWARD US...

WE CAN GAIN MUCH BY MUTUAL FRIENDSHIP! MY NAME IS ROBERT ELLIS! THIS IS THE SHIP'S COMMANDER, ARNOLD MORRISON...



FINALLY THE ALIENS ALL COME OUT OF THEIR SHELTERS AND STAND AROUND, EYEING US CURIOUSLY! THE FEMALES ARE ALL EXTREMELY BEAUTIFUL! ONE OF THE MALES... OBVIOUSLY THE CHIEF... STEPS FORWARD! ELLIS'S A.T. UNIT PICKS UP HIS CRACKLING VOICE...

WELCOME TO GASTROPODIA! I AM THE RULER HERE! MY NAME IS FORDOBA! TELL US ABOUT YOUR GALACTIC EMPIRE! WE ARE NOT AS SCIENTIFICALLY ADVANCED AS YOU SEEM TO BE!



WE SPEND MANY HOURS AFTER THAT GIVING THE ALIENS OF GASTROPODIA A ROUGH IDEA OF EARTH, AND THE OTHER MEMBER-PLANETS OF THE GALACTIC EMPIRE! THAT EVENING THE ENTIRE CREW IS ENTERTAINED LAVISHLY...



FINALLY I GET UP ENOUGH NERVE TO INTRODUCE MYSELF TO THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ALIEN...

MY NAME IS ARNOLD! WHAT IS YOURS?

LUWANA!



YOU ARE VERY BEAUTIFUL, LUWANA! ARE YOU...ER...MARRIED?

MARRIED? WHAT IS THAT?



DO YOU HAVE A HUSBAND... A MATE?

OH, NO! I AM NOT MATED YET!



I GUESS I FALL IN LOVE WITH LUWANA ALMOST IMMEDIATELY! ANYWAY, BY THE TIME THE SHIP IS REPAIRED, I MAKE UP MY MIND...

YOU'RE CRAZY, COMMANDER! STAY HERE... ON THIS PRIMITIVE PLANET?

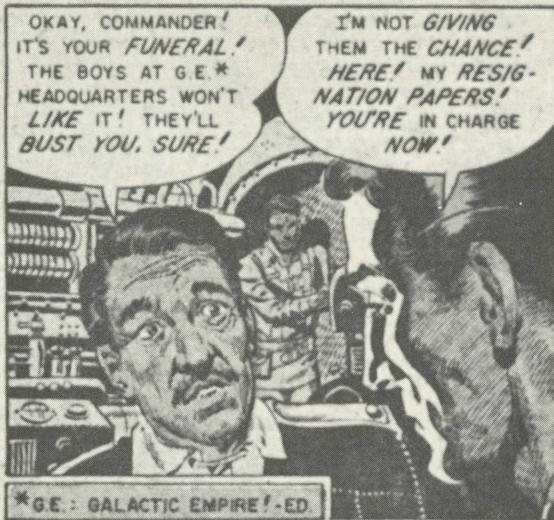
I'M IN LOVE WITH HER, ELLIS! SHE'S CONSENTED TO BE MY WIFE!



THEN BRING HER BACK WITH YOU! DON'T STAY HERE, SIR!

I'M TIRED, ELLIS! I'VE BEEN HOPPING AROUND THE GALAXY FOR SIX YEARS NOW! I WANT TO SETTLE DOWN! THIS PLACE LOOKS GOOD TO ME!





SO, LUWANA AND I ARE 'MARRIED'! THE CEREMONY IS A LITTLE PRIMITIVE, BUT I DON'T MIND MUCH! I THINK OF LUWANA... HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS... AND HOW VERY MUCH I LOVE HER...





OTHERS OF THE COLONY GATHER AROUND THE STRUCTURE... TRYING TO GOAX THE YOUNGSTER FROM HIS HIDING PLACE! FINALLY HIS WIDE EYED LITTLE FACE APPEARS...



FINALLY, THE YOUNGSTER CRAWLS FROM THE IGLOO-THING! THE GATHERING CHEERS! THE BOY SMILES SHYLY! THEN HIS SHELTER IS LIFTED ALOFT AND CARRIED TO THE SPOT WHERE THE OTHERS ARE LINED UP, ROW UPON ROW...



BUT I GET MY IGLOO ANYWAY! LUWANA INSISTS! USUALLY THEY DESTROY THEM WHEN THEIR OWNER KICKS OFF, BUT ONE THEY SAVE... FOR ME...



IT'S ABOUT SIX MONTHS LATER THAT THE STRANGE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS BEGINS! AT FIRST I DON'T THINK ANYTHING OF IT WHEN LUWANA CUTS HER LONG GOLDEN HAIR SHORT...



...OR WHEN SHE BEGINS TO LOSE HER EXOTIC FIGURE...



BUT WHEN HER FACE BEGINS TO CHANGE SLIGHTLY, I QUESTION HER...



AND I AM EVEN MORE CONFUSED WHEN LUWANA BEGINS TO SHUN MY ADVANCES...



I CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT'S COME OVER LUWANA!
I AM COMPLETELY SPURNED! AT NIGHT, I GO WALKING...



THE ROWS OF BOMB-SHELTER, IGLOO-SHAPED STRUCTURES GLEAM IN THE LIGHT FROM THE PLANET'S TWO MOONS! I CRAWL INSIDE MINE...

SUDDENLY IT HITS ME... THE WHOLE CRAZY PICTURE! FROM BEYOND THE WALL, I HEAR AN INFANT'S PITEFUL WAILING...



I SCALE THE WALL EASILY...

...AND DART INTO THE NURSERY BUILDING...



A LOOK INTO ONE DORMITORY IS ENOUGH! THEY'RE THERE, THE YOUNG ONES... JUST LIKE I EXPECTED THEM TO BE! THEY STARE AT ME... POKING THEIR HEADS OUT OF THEIR SHELLS...



I STUMBLE FROM THE NURSERY-BUILDING...

I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN! THOSE GLOO-THINGS ARE THE ALIEN'S SHELLS! THEY'RE BORN WITH THEM, BUT EVENTUALLY EMERGE FROM THEM WHEN THEY'RE FULLY DEVELOPED! THEY USE THEM ONLY FOR PROTECTION AFTER THAT!



WHEN I GET HOME, I TIP-TOE INTO LUWANA'S BEDROOM AND LIGHT THE LIGHT! I STARE AT THE HEAVY STUBBLE GROWING OUT OF HIS CHEEKS, THE BROADENED SHOULDERS, THE FLAT CHEST...



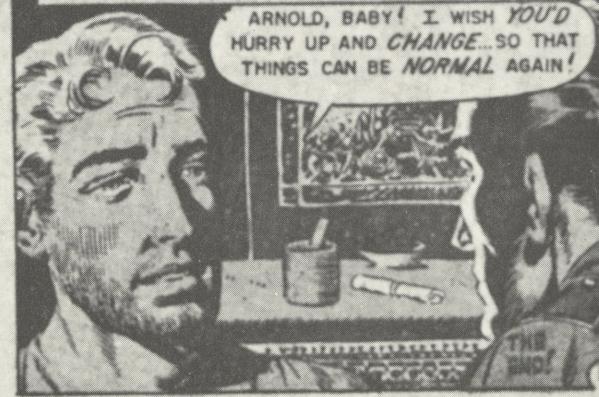
...AND WANDERED AIMLESSLY TOWARD MY HOME...

THAT...THAT EXPLAINS WHY LUWANA HAS BEEN ACTING STRANGELY LATELY! THESE PEOPLE ARE LIKE THE VARIETY OF SNAILS BACK ON EARTH THAT ARE HERMAPHRODITIC! THEY CHANGE SEX! THE MALE CHANGES TO A FEMALE, AND...GULP...VICE VERSA...



LUWANA LOOKS AT ME WITH SLEEPY EYES! EVEN THOSE LONG EYELASHES HAVE SHED! HIS GLANCE DROPS... THEN HE SHRUGS...

ARNOLD, BABY! I WISH YOU'D HURRY UP AND CHANGE... SO THAT THINGS CAN BE NORMAL AGAIN!



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

by WILLIAMSON
KRENKEL

THE SHIP CAME OUT OF THE BLACK NIGHT SPITTING FIRE... AND GROCK KNEW AN EAGERNESS ALMOST UNBEARABLE IN ITS INTENSITY. THE PLANET RUSTLED AND WAITED. IT HAD WAITED SO LONG. BUT NOW, THE WAITING WAS OVER. **THEY** WERE RETURNING! THEY RODE WITHIN THE ALLOY BOWELS OF THE ROCKET. THEY WERE COMING BACK, AT LAST! MEN!

THE ROCKET SPHEWED FLAME, SETTLED, IN HIS EAGERNESS, GROCK SENT HIS MIND QUESTING THROUGH ITS METAL. YES! THE MEN WERE THERE...

WHEW! I'VE SEEN ALL KINDS, CAPTAIN, BUT OLD MOTHER NATURE REALLY OUTDID HERSELF HERE!

STRANGE PLANET,
STRANGE LIFE FORMS.
YOU'RE A BIOLOGIST,
MASON! YOU KNOW THAT?

IT'S BEEN FIFTY THOUSAND YEARS SINCE EARTH'S ECOLOGICAL TEAMS SEEDED THIS PLANET. PLENTY OF TIME FOR STIMULATED MUTATION. HOW LONG DO YOU THINK OUR JOB WILL TAKE?

A FEW DAYS. I DON'T THINK IT WILL TAKE LONGER THAN THAT TO DETERMINE IF THE PLANET IS READY FOR COLONIZATION. BUT FROM WHAT I CAN SEE, I HAVE MY DOUBTS.



PERSONALLY, I'VE GOT A HUNCH THIS PLACE IS GOING TO BE A BUST AS FAR AS COLONISTS ARE CONCERNED.

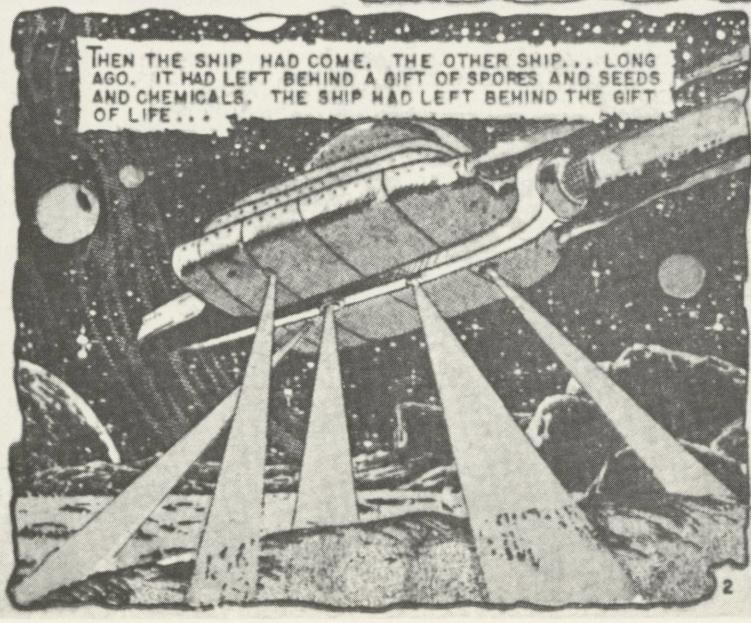
THAT REMAINS TO BE SEEN, EARTH NEEDS COLONIES. THAT'S WHY THE WASTE PLANETS WERE SEEDED. THE NEED WAS ANTICIPATED. SO LET'S HOPE YOU'RE WRONG, MASON. I'M TURNING IN.

GROCK PROBED...AND THEN THERE WAS NOTHING. THE MEN SLEPT, BUT GROCK HAD HEARD. COLONISTS! THE THOUGHT WAS WARM, SWEET. MEN MUST COME! THEY MUST! ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT, HE SAVORED THE DREAM...

IT HAD BEEN SO LONG, YET GROCK COULD REMEMBER. THE RACIAL MEMORIES LINGERED, DIMLY, HE COULD RECALL THE LEGENDS WHICH TOLD HOW ONCE THIS PLANET HAD BEEN DEAD, STERILE...



THEN THE SHIP HAD COME, THE OTHER SHIP... LONG AGO. IT HAD LEFT BEHIND A GIFT OF SPORES AND SEEDS AND CHEMICALS. THE SHIP HAD LEFT BEHIND THE GIFT OF LIFE...



THE SHIP HAD COME AND GONE, AND LIFE HAD TAKEN HOLD... ON THIS DEAD, STERILE PLANET...

SLOWLY AT FIRST... A TINY SHOOT... A MICROSCOPIC ANIMAL. THEN, AS TIME CREEP BY...

YES, MAN HAD BROUGHT LIFE, AND MAN'S SCIENCE HAD IMPREGNATED THAT LIFE SO THAT IT CHANGED, EVOLVED... SWIFTLY...



FOR HALF A THOUSAND CENTURIES, THE PLANET HAD FLOWERED... AND WAITED. AND NOW, MAN HAD RETURNED...



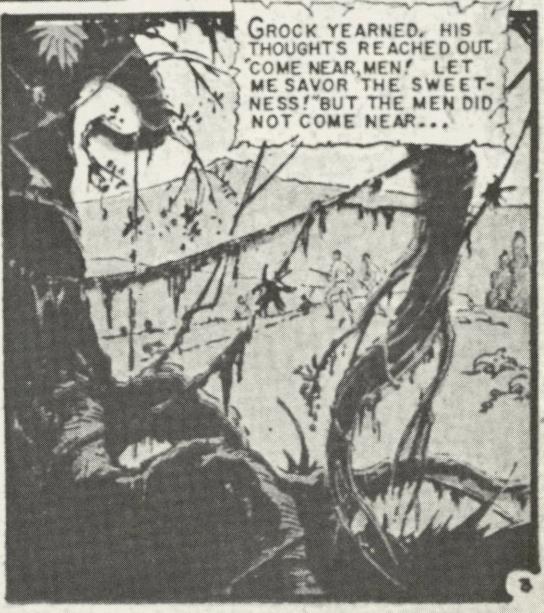
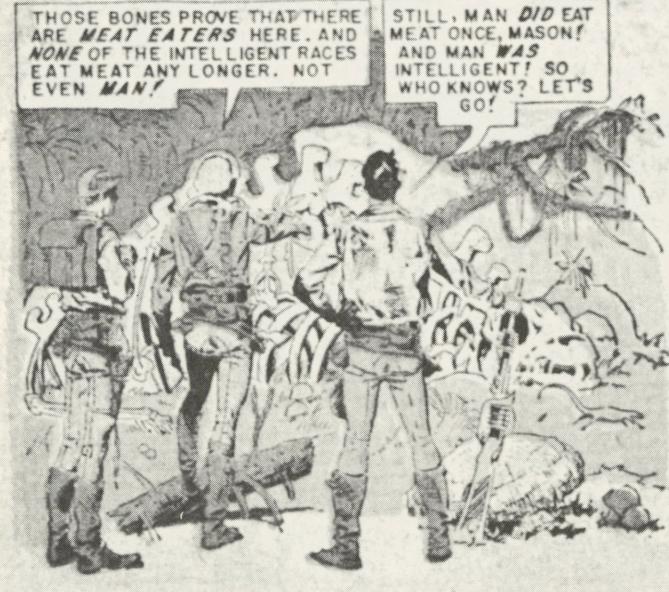
WE'LL SPLIT INTO TWO PARTIES AS USUAL. YOU ALL KNOW WHAT WE WANT. SAMPLES OF ANIMAL LIFE FORMS, PARTICULARLY INTELLIGENT ANIMAL LIFE.

I DON'T THINK WE'LL FIND MUCH, CAPTAIN! LOOK THERE!



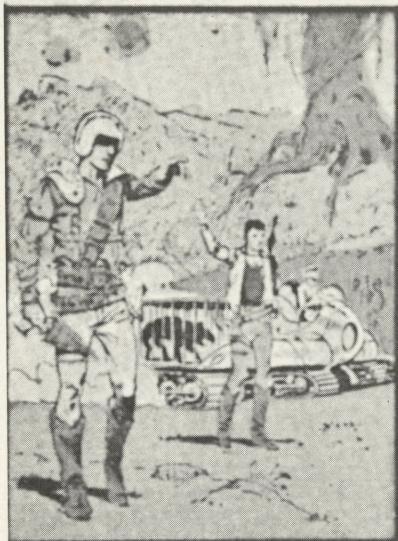
THOSE BONES PROVE THAT THERE ARE MEAT EATERS HERE, AND NONE OF THE INTELLIGENT RACES EAT MEAT ANY LONGER. NOT EVEN MAN!

STILL, MAN DID EAT MEAT ONCE, MASON! AND MAN WAS INTELLIGENT! SO WHO KNOWS? LET'S GO!



GROCK YEARNED, HIS THOUGHTS REACHED OUT. 'COME NEAR, MEN! LET ME SAVOR THE SWEETNESS!' BUT THE MEN DID NOT COME NEAR...

THE MEN DID NOT COME NEAR, AND GROCK TREMBLED WITH DISAPPOINTMENT. ALL HIS THOUGHTS WERE OF THEM IN THE LONG DAYS AFTER...



IT WAS GOOD TO HAVE THEM NEAR AGAIN AT LAST. ON THE THIRD DAY, THEY RETURNED. BUT GROCK DID NOT UNDERSTAND...



AND FROM OUR SURVEY, WE KNOW THAT CONDITIONS ARE EXACTLY SIMILAR ALL OVER THIS PLANET. I WAS RIGHT! MAN COULD NEVER THRIVE HERE!

NO, I SUPPOSE NOT! UNDER STIMULATED MUTATION THESE ANIMALS HAVE COVERED A MILLION YEARS OF EVOLUTION IN FIFTY THOUSAND. AND YET... NOTHING!



EXACTLY! SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE, THEIR EVOLUTION TOOK A WRONG TURNING. YOU SAW THE FOREST! NO FRUITS, NO NUTS! EVEN THE ANIMALS SEEM TO AVOID IT!



THAT MIGHT BE A CLUE! ANY THEORIES, SWANSON? THIS IS IN YOUR LINE. WHY WOULD ANIMALS LEARN TO AVOID THE FORESTS? NOXIOUS SOIL? RADIATION?

SORRY, CAPTAIN. THE SOIL IS GOOD AND THERE IS NO RADIATION! ALL I CAN SAY IS THAT IF ANIMALS CAN EVOLVE INTO THINGS LIKE THESE HERE... THE SAME THING COULD HAPPEN TO MAN!

IN OTHER WORDS, WE'RE STUMPED!

STUMPED! IT WOULD BE CRIMINAL TO BRING COLONISTS HERE! LOOK AT THE PLACE! THE ONLY WAY IT WILL EVER BE FIT FOR COLONIZATION IS IF IT'S BURNED CLEAN AND WE START ALL OVER AGAIN!

I'M AFRAID THAT'S JUST WHAT WE'LL HAVE TO DO, MASON! FIFTY THOUSAND YEARS... WASTED! WHAT A PITY!

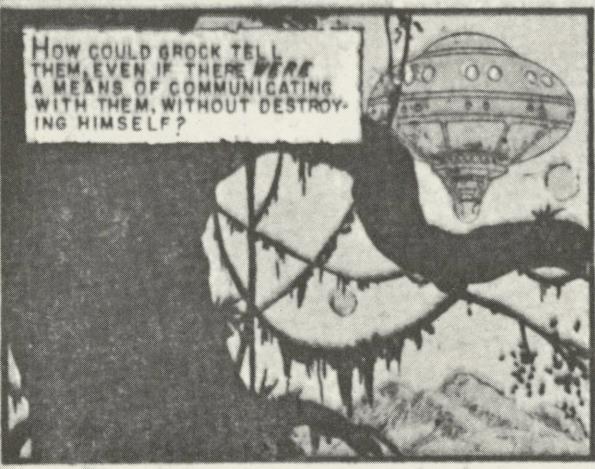


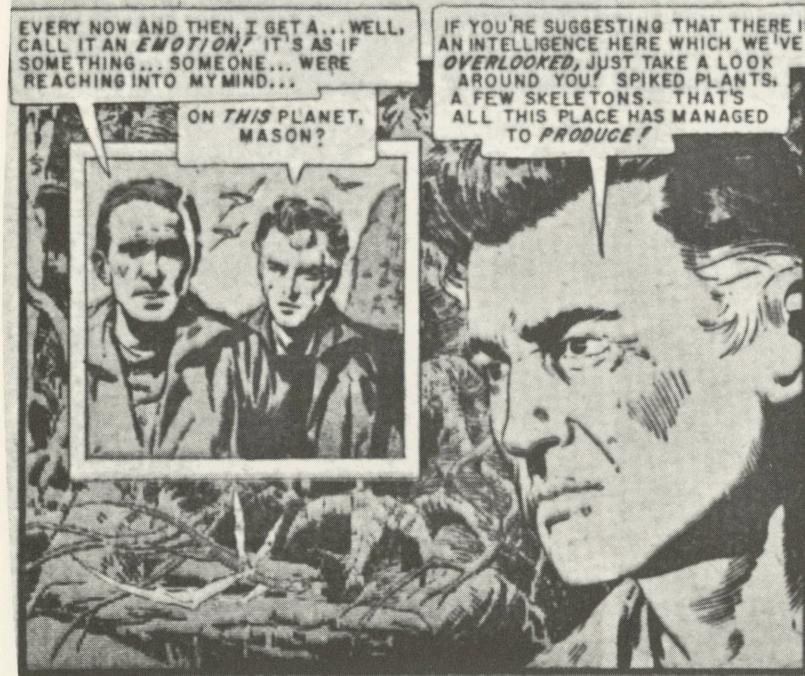
No! GROCK ALMOST SCREAMED THE WORD. BUT THE MEN WOULD NOT HAVE HEARD, EVEN IF HE HAD. THEIR MINDS WERE... DIFFERENT...

STILL, THERE SEEKS TO BE NO CHOICE! EARTH NEEDS ROOM FOR HER EXCESS POPULATION. WE'LL USE THIS SPOT AS A BASE OF OPERATIONS...

IN THE MORNING WE BEGIN OPERATION BURN-OUT! AND SMALL LOSS!

MAN HAD COME, AND NOW, MAN WAS GOING TO DESTROY! BUT THE MEN WERE WRONG! THERE WAS INTELLIGENT LIFE HERE! THERE WAS! ONLY, HOW COULD GROCK MAKE THE MEN UNDERSTAND?





GROCK SHIVERED. IT WAS TOO MUCH TO HOPE FOR. GROCK HAD WISHED SO HARD... FOR SO LONG. AFTERWARD, HIS WISH CAME TRUE...

BLASTED EMPTY, USELESS PLANET! IT GIVES ME THE CREEPS!



AFTERWARD, GROCK COULD HEAR THE WORDS AND NOT CARE. HE COULD FORGET THE FLAMES AND THE BURNING, EVEN WHEN THE CAPTAIN HIMSELF MUTTERED IN HIS SLEEP...

...NO... INTELLIGENT LIFE... NOTHING THAT... THINKS... BURN IT ALL... START OVER...



LATER, GROCK WOULD CARE, BECAUSE THERE WOULD BE NO MORE MEN, AFTER TONIGHT, NOT FOR A LONG, LONG TIME. BUT THAT DID NOT MATTER NOW...



FOR NOW, GROCK LET HIS CREEPERS DOWN... GENTLY...



MAN HAD RETURNED, AT LAST, AND GROCK WAS CONTENT. IT HAD BEEN SO LONG SINCE ANY ANIMAL HAD VENTURED NEAR HIM...



THE MEN STRUGGLED...CALLED OUT, FROM THE SHIP, A SLEEPY VOICE ANSWERED. A FIGURE APPEARED IN THE PORT WEAPON IN HAND...

W- WHAT GOES ON OUT HERE? CAN'T A GUY GET SOME REST! I... WHAT THE...!?

THE TREE, HOAD! THE TREE'S ALIVE! SHOOT! SHOOT...



GROCK SHUDDERED, DROPPING THE MEN, AS THE STREAM OF DESTRUCTIVE ENERGY FROM HOAD'S WEAPON DISINTEGRATED HIS TRUNK... HIS FEEDER-ROOTS...



GROCK'S SAP RAN. HIS VINES DROOPED, STRING-LIKE. HIS LEAVES CURLLED. AND DARKNESS BEGAN TO NUMB HIS PERCEPTIVE SENSES. VAGUELY, HE COULD HEAR THE MEN... SENSE THEIR VOICES, FADING...



GROCK DIED. HIS LEAVES DROPPED LIKE PAPER BITS, TORN BY CHILDREN AND TOSSED TO THE WIND. CHILDREN WHO COULD NOT UNDERSTAND, BECAUSE IT WAS BEYOND THEIR LIMITED IMAGINATIONS...

ALL RIGHT! LET'S GET GOING! IT'S ALMOST DAWN, ANYWAY! BURN OUT THAT LAST PATCH, INCLUDING MASON'S INTELLIGENT TREE! WE'VE GOT TO BE ON OUR WAY!



GROCK WITHERED. HIS SENSES REELED. THEIR VOICES WERE ONLY WHISPERS NOW...

CAN YOU SAYA "VENUS FLY-TRAP" CAN'T THINK... CAN'T FEEL... CAN'T REASON, CAPTAIN?

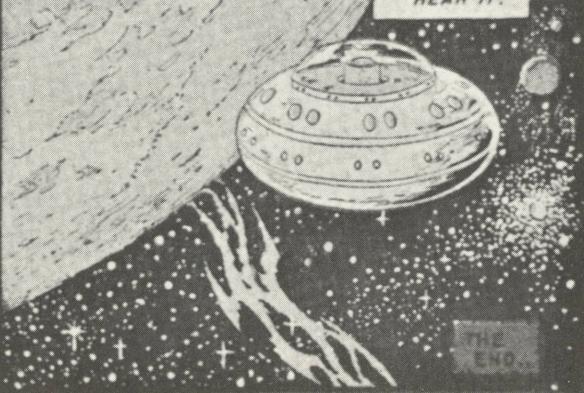
RIDICULOUS! WHO EVER HEARD OF AN INTELLIGENT TREE?



LATER, THE SHIP ROSE INTO THE MORNING LIGHT. BEHIND IT, THE PLANET LAY BLACK AND SCORCHED AND STERILE. THE CAPTAIN TURNED TO MASON...

IF THAT TREE WAS SO INTELLIGENT, MASON, WHY COULDN'T IT COMMUNICATE WITH US?

PERHAPS IT TRIED, CAPTAIN! PERHAPS WE WEREN'T INTELLIGENT ENOUGH TO HEAR IT!



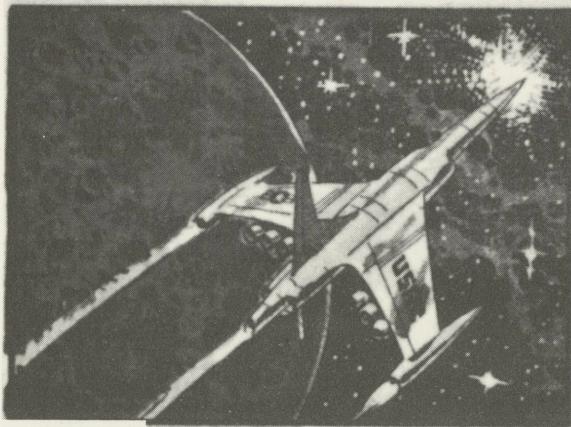
THE END.

MY WORLD

THIS IS MY WORLD. THIS IS THE WORLD I LOVE. IT IS A STEAMING TROPICAL SWAMP, DAMP AND STINKING AND ALIVE WITH SCREAMING BIRDS AND SLITHERING LIZARDS AND HUMMING INSECTS AND GIANT DINOSAURS THAT SPLASH THROUGH ITS STAGNANT POOLS AND SLOSH THROUGH ITS SUCKING BOGS IN SEARCH OF FOOD TO FILL THEIR CAVERNOUS BELLIES...



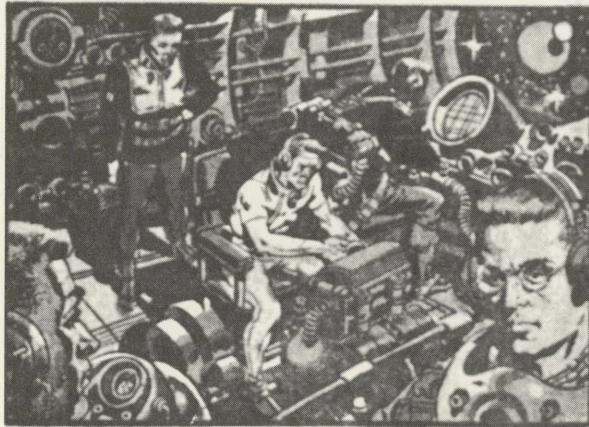
IT IS AN ANGRY ROCKET SHIP, LEAPING UPWARD AT THE STARS... SPITTING FLAME AND SMOKE AND ROARING SO LOUD IT SEEMS TO SHAKE DOWN THE VERY HEAVENS IT IS ATTEMPTING TO CONQUER...



IT IS A GLEAMING CITY, RISING FROM THE ROLLING COUNTRYSIDE AND REACHING TOWARD THE SUN, EMBRACING WITHIN ITS GLASS-WALLED BUILDINGS ITS DWELLERS, WHO COME AND GO IN SHINING BEETLE-CARS OR HUMMING AERO-CABS OR STAND CONTENTEDLY ON SLOWLY MOVING SIDEWALKS...



THIS IS MY WORLD. IT IS A WORLD OF GRIM-FACED MEN SITTING BEFORE BATTERIES OF GAUGES AND DIALS AND LEVERS AND BUTTONS, GUIDING THEIR METAL MONSTER ACROSS A HAIRSBREATH OF THE VAST BLACK GULF OF UNENDING SPACE...



THIS IS THE WORLD I LOVE. IT IS THE MOMENT WHEN THE ROCKET-SHIP BREAKS FREE OF EARTH'S GRAVITY AND STREAKS THROUGH THE VOID IN FREE FALL...WHEN ITS CREWMEN ARE SUDDENLY WEIGHTLESS AND FLOAT LIKE CHILDREN'S BALLOONS AT THE CIRCUS...



IT IS A WORLD OF EXPLORATION INTO THE UNKNOWN... THE SUDDEN THRILL OF GAZING UPON AN ALIEN LANDSCAPE THAT NO HUMAN BEING HAS EVER GAZED UPON BEFORE...



...THE SUDDEN VIOLENT ATTACK OF SHRIEKING ALIEN MONSTERS...



...THE MONSTERS' EQUALLY SUDDEN DESTRUCTION... BLASTED TO SMITHREENS BY POWERFUL WEAPONS OF MY WORLD...



THE OTHER ALIEN CREATURES...HARMLESS...CURIOS...CUTE...



THE SUCKING GULPING MOUNTAIN OF SHIMMERING PROTOPLASMIC LIFE, SLITHERING FROM ONE OF THE RUINED BUILDINGS...



THIS IS MY WORLD, IT IS A WORLD OF LONELY WOMEN WHO TURN THEIR EYES TO THE HEAVENS AND WATCH FOR THE MOVING FLAME AMONG THE STARS THAT SIGNIFIES THE RETURN OF THEIR SPACE-MEN...



THE RUINS OF A ONCE PROUD CITY...NOW FALLING TO DUST. BUILT BY AN ANCIENT CIVILIZATION, WHOSE MEMBERS, TOO, HAVE LONG SINCE FALLEN TO DUST...



...ABSORBING ALL ORGANIC MATERIAL IN ITS PATH...ENGULFING TOM OR DICK OR HARRY WHILE I LISTEN TO HIS BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAMS ON MY INTERCOM...



...AND THE MEN WHO NEVER COME BACK...THE MEN WHO ARE FLUNG INTO THE VOID BY THE VIOLENT EXPLOSION OF THEIR HOMeward-BOUND ROCKET...



MY WORLD IS A WORLD OF VIOLENT EMOTION...OF ANGER AND HATE BUILDING UP THROUGH THE DRAGGING MONTHS OF TRAVELING THROUGH SPACE. THE SUDDEN FLARE-UP... THE VOLCANIC ERUPTION OF SUPPRESSED ENERGY...



...THE FINAL VICTORY OF ONE OVER THE OTHER. THE SICKENING THUD OF THE METAL WRENCH CRUSHING SKULL...SPATTERING BRAINS...SPILLING BLOOD...



MY WORLD IS A WORLD WHERE ATOMIC WARS RAGE...



...THE STRUGGLE OF MUSCLE PITTED AGAINST MUSCLE... BONE AGAINST BONE...SINEW AND TENDON...



MY WORLD IS A WORLD WHERE BEAUTIFUL ALIEN CREATURES SIT BESIDE A STILL POOL AND CARESS A WEARY SPACE-MAN, STROKING HIS HAIR AND KISSING HIS CHEEKS AND MAKING HIM FORGET ABOUT EARTH AND EVER RETURNING...



...WHERE WHOLE CITIES ARE LEVELED BY ONE MISSIVE OF DESTRUCTION. WHERE A BABY SITS AMONG THE RUINS, COVERED WITH RADIATION BURNS, CRYING FOR MY WORLD...



MY WORLD CAN BE A WORLD OF DESOLATION...
WITHOUT LIFE...WITHOUT HOPE...



...OR IT CAN BE A WORLD OF EVERLASTING PEACE AND
UNDERSTANDING AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN...



MY WORLD CAN BE A WORLD OF SPACE-STATIONS...



...OF ROCKET TRANSPORTS THAT LEAP ACROSS CONTINENTS IN
MINUTES...



...OF ATOMIC-POWERED LINERS THAT SPAN GREAT OCEANS
WITH THE ENERGY DERIVED FROM A SINGLE LUMP OF COAL...



...OF GREAT SPACE-SHIPS THAT CARRY TOURISTS ON
BRIEF HOLIDAYS TO VENUS OR MARS OR SATURN...



...OR MY WORLD CAN BE UGLY. IT CAN BE A WORLD OF INVASIONS FROM OUTER SPACE BY HORRIBLE INTELLIGENT ALIENS BENT ON CONQUERING MY WORLD. COMING ACROSS SPACE IN FLEETS OF FLYING SAUCERS...



...LANDING AT NIGHT AND ENTERING MY CITIES AND KILLING AND MAIMING AND DESTROYING...



MY WORLD IS WHAT I CHOOSE TO MAKE IT. MY WORLD IS YESTERDAY...



...OR TODAY...



...OR TOMORROW...



FOR MY WORLD IS THE WORLD OF SCIENCE-FICTION... CONCEIVED IN MY MIND AND PLACED UPON PAPER WITH PENCIL AND INK AND BRUSH AND SWEAT AND A GREAT DEAL OF LOVE FOR MY WORLD. FOR I AM A SCIENCE-FICTION ARTIST. MY NAME IS WOOD.



THE
END

FANTASY



NO. 22
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WEIRD



10¢

SCIENCE



INcredible SCIENCE-FICTION STORIES!